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SUBJECT: GERMAN POLITICAL DIRECTOR IN MOSCOW: IRAN, MD, AND CFE DOMINATE

REF: MOSCOW 4929

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: German Political Director Stanzel's October 9 visit to Moscow touched on most major international issues, including Iran, missile defense, and CFE. During his meeting with Stanzel, DFM Kislyak reaffirmed Russia's interest in maintaining a united front with the EC 3 on Iran. Kislyak called for openness regarding new Iranian proposals, but acknowledged that such proposals could be a stalling tactic. While Putin's October 16 trip to Tehran aimed to reinforce the importance of Iran's compliance, Kislyak told Stanzel that an arms embargo against Iran is a Russian redline. GOR officials reiterated Russia's familiar positions on MD, CFE, and Kosovo, expressing doubt that a compromise could be reached on any of these thorny issues. DFM Titov also expressed concern that the EU did not intend to take the upcoming EU-Russia Summit seriously. MFA officials were upbeat about Russia's counternarcotics efforts in Central Asia and renewed military assistance to Afghanistan. End summary.

¶2. (C) German Embassy officials gave us a readout on Political Director Volker Stanzel's October 9 visit to Moscow, which included meetings with Deputy Foreign Ministers Kislyak and Titov, Duma Sub-Committee for EU-Russia Relations Chairman Klimov, and several think tanks. The discussions touched on Iran, CFE, Kosovo, and missile defense, but also looking to the October 26 EU-Russia Summit. Russia reiterated many familiar positions, which the German Embassy attributed to Russian officials not wanting to steal the thunder from the upcoming visits of French President Sarkozy, the 22, and Putin's travel to Wiesbaden.

Iran and Missile Defense

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¶3. (C) DFM Kislyak told Stanzel that the GOR was satisfied with the foreign ministers' meeting in New York, and saw a "window of opportunity" to solve ongoing questions with Iran. The GOR agreed that a united EC 3 approach was vital. Kislyak said Russia was in favor of the EC 3 developing a common strategy in preparation of a new proposal from Iran, which he pointed out the Ahmadinejad regime could use as an excuse for delaying implementation of its responsibilities. However, Kislyak stressed that any Iranian proposal should not be rejected out of hand, that EU High Representative Solana's mandate should be flexible enough to react to new proposals, and that the EC 3 should be a forum to find "creative" solutions to the problem. Kislyak said that "if Iran implements the UNSC resolutions, it should be treated like any other country," but questioned whether that would be acceptable to the United States.

¶4. (C) According to German diplomats, Kislyak told Stanzel

that the GOR firmly believes that Iran only wants the "technical possibility" of having an atomic arsenal, but not the actual weapons. Kislyak emphasized that Putin will forcefully remind the Iranians that they must fulfill outstanding UNSC resolutions and IAEA obligations during his October 16 trip to Tehran. German diplomats repeated that Kislyak told Stanzel that an arms embargo against Iran remained a Russian redline.

¶5. (C) Kislyak told Stanzel that Iran's current weapons program was not enough of a threat to warrant the U.S. missile defense plan. Kislyak said that Putin wanted a "strategic partnership" where all interested parties could have input in decisions, whereas the U.S. approach denied even those countries hosting MD sites a say in their use. Stanzel told Kislyak that the U.S. would come to NATO for discussions about missile defense after Czech and Polish negotiations were finished, but Kislyak replied that would be "too late" and at that point it would be too hard to back away.

CFE

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¶6. (C) Although Kislyak thanked the Germans for their recent initiative to host a seminar on CFE, German diplomats told us the GOR core position had not changed. According to Kislyak, the GOR was "not optimistic" that a common position could be found before December. The GOR found recent NATO troop deployments in new NATO countries "threatening" and Kislyak stated Russia did not understand their purpose. He also told Stanzel that "some NATO countries" were happy for the opportunity to disregard CFE because it provided transparency into their activities. He reaffirmed that the GOR did not

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want to "drop" CFE, but sought to prompt ratification.

Kosovo

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¶7. (C) According to German contacts, DFM Titov told Stanzel that neither the Serbs nor the Kosovars were truly interested in the troika negotiations, and predicted they would be "no further along in December than they were in July." Titov noted ominously that if the U.S. and EU proceed unilaterally, Putin will "take serious interest" in split nations, pointing to the specific example of North and South Ossetia. He did not clarify what such interest might entail.

Afghanistan

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¶8. (C) Kislyak noted that narcotics trafficking was a growing issue in Afghanistan. He told Stanzel that Russia is working with Central Asian countries because Afghanistan's neighbors "are not able to help secure borders" and needed support. He also noted that Iran is "very helpful" on this issue.

¶9. (C) Regarding recently announced military aid to Afghanistan (reftel), the GOR clarified to German diplomats that it has three priorities: to assess the Karzai government's military needs, to determine how these weapons would be used, and to create end-use verification mechanisms.

The GOR stressed to German diplomats that although it might ask CSTO for use of storage facilities, the aid would be primarily bilateral.

EU-Russia Summit

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¶10. (C) Titov said the EU-Russia Summit was very important to Russia, but expressed concern that the EU would not take the upcoming summit seriously because of its proximity to

Russian elections. German diplomats told us that Titov appealed to Stanzel not to write the meeting off before it took place.

Burns